

# DECISION



THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

51066

FILE: B-184092

DATE: SEP 29 1975 9-7400

MATTER OF: Bob McHenry - Reimbursement for travel expenses  
pursuant to change of duty station

DIGEST: Where employee travels at own expense from duty station in Alaska to Oklahoma while on educational leave and then travels directly to new duty station in North Dakota pursuant to official transfer, he is entitled to reimbursement for travel and transportation expenses from Oklahoma to North Dakota but not for constructive cost from Alaska to his new duty station. Government is not obligated when expenses are not incurred.

This action is in response to a request for an advance decision from a certifying officer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), United States Department of the Interior, whether a supplemental travel voucher submitted by Mr. Bob McHenry, a BIA employee, may be certified for payment.

The record indicates that Mr. McHenry traveled in late May 1974, from his official duty station in Grayling, Alaska, to Sallisaw, Oklahoma, while on educational leave under 25 U.S.C. § 275 (1970), and 44 BIA Manual 630, subchapter 14. The administrative report indicates that the employee's salary is paid during educational leave but that no other costs are to be incurred, such as travel expenses to and from the educational institution. The administrative report also states:

"\* \* \* Under usual circumstances Mr. McHenry would have returned to Alaska upon completion of the training, but in this instance he did not, as he was selected for a transfer to North Dakota while at the training site. He traveled directly to North Dakota from Oklahoma."

The record indicates that the BIA authorized travel from Sallisaw, Oklahoma, to Twin Buttes, North Dakota, pursuant to the employee executing an employment agreement dated August 19, 1974. Mr. McHenry was reimbursed for his travel and transportation expenses as well as for the cost of shipment of his household goods from storage in Topeka, Kansas, to his new duty station.

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The employee has submitted a supplemental travel voucher for reimbursement for the lesser of the cost of travel - Alaska-Oklahoma-North Dakota or Alaska-North Dakota. The administrative office questions whether it may pay such a voucher as the expenses of travel from Alaska to Oklahoma were incurred prior to notification of official transfer and were not related to his official transfer.

The authority for payment or reimbursement by the Government of travel and transportation expenses of a transferred employee and his immediate family and of the transportation of his household goods is contained in 5 U.S.C. § 5724 (1970). We have stated that the purpose of this provision is to relieve a transferred employee of certain expenses which he incurs as a result of the change of his official duty station for the benefit of the Government, and that when these expenses are not incurred the Government has no obligation concerning such expenses. B-173758, October 8, 1971. Since travel was not authorized from Alaska to North Dakota there is no authority to reimburse the employee for such "constructive travel."

Accordingly, the voucher may not be certified for payment.

DEPUTY COMPTROLLER  
Deputy } Comptroller General  
of the United States